

DOMESTIC RELATIONS COURT DECLARED A VITAL NEED OF CAPITAL

CHANGE IN LAW IS URGED

Judge Kathryn Sellers Bases Plea on Four Years' Experience.

By GEORGE FRANKLIN.

Foreseeing the possibility of lessening the divorce evil, and through proper investigation of non-support charges, correcting domestic conditions which lead to the breaking up of families, Judge Kathryn Sellers, of the Juvenile Court, is seeking the development of her bench of justice into a Domestic Court, with jurisdiction to deal with many phases of domestic unhappiness now determinable only in criminal and higher courts.

Judge Sellers bases her application for an enlargement of her court authority on her four years' experience in presiding over the Juvenile Court. Her ideas are embodied in a report filed with Attorney General Daugherty urging passage of the required legislation he has under consideration.

As outlined by Judge Sellers, favorable action on her report will result in the creation of a Domestic Court of which the Juvenile Court will become a branch. The proposed court would have concurrent jurisdiction with the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, becoming a court of record with its own seal and empowered to enforce its decrees.

Judge Sellers' Opinions.

"Creation of a Domestic Court through the expansion of the Juvenile Court is essential to a proper administration of justice in considering domestic cases involving desertion, non-support and the disposal and subsequent control of dependent children," said Judge Sellers today.

Judge Sellers sat in the reception room of her home, 1626 Swann street, surrounded by every evidence of the Christmas spirit from which she willingly withdrew herself to discuss what she considers the most important problem before the residents of Washington.

"Under existing conditions the adjustment of non-support cases is often extremely difficult. It is made so by the fact that court procedure discriminates between the woman in easy circumstances and the poor woman. The former, who can afford the expense, may bring a civil action in equity against her husband in the Superior Court when he fails to support her. No criminal element attaches to this action. The poor woman, unable to meet the cost of an action in equity, is forced into taking criminal action, which means that she must file a complaint against her husband, going before a grand jury with her charge, which, in turn, finds an indictment against him. This means his arrest and trial in a criminal court, with the resultant criminal record against him. Such action often creates an insurmountable barrier to subsequent reconciliation and many times leads to a final divorce.

Effect on Children.

"It is only necessary to consider the situation of children involved by such actions to see the justice of insisting that regardless of financial conditions the two petitioners should have access to the same judicial adjustment of their cases.

"Child welfare is the most important consideration with which we can be concerned. It is the fundamental factor in social progress. Hence, its relations to the administration of the law is of the most vital importance.

"Until this is recognized society, in its efforts to attain the great aims before it, remains heavily handicapped. Therefore, objection to the creation of a domestic court, with its juvenile court division, is difficult to understand.

"The family is the recognized unit on which society depends for its stability. To maintain it, to prevent its being broken up by causes which in the vast majority of cases can be corrected by proper judicial consideration is of greatest importance. How can this be accomplished most effectively?

Speaks From Experience.

"To that there can be but one answer. Through a court with jurisdiction to deal primarily with all domestic relation cases, where rich and poor stand on the same footing, and where the presiding judge is empowered to make such special investigations as the circumstances warrant and subsequently enforce the court's findings.

"A division of jurisdiction is the very last thing desirable. It is because I see the situation, as the result of four years' experience as judge of the Juvenile Court, in all its lateral bearings that I am urging the creation of a domestic court through the expansion of the Juvenile Court."

Judge Sellers has pronounced views on the position of the man charged by his wife with non-support. In numerous instances cited by her investigation proved the charges unsupported by the evidence. Every man from whom support is sought by his wife through court action, Judge Sellers insists, should be investigated by the court before hearing the case.

It is not to be inferred, however, that Judge Sellers conceives it possible that any set of circumstances will relieve a man from supporting his wife and his children.

Must Support Families.

"No man has the moral or legal right to refuse to support his family," she said. "What quite frequently happens is that a man charged with non-support is really less guilty than he is made out to be. I am urging the wife's charge of failure to support her and her children meant that the husband and father had simply failed to give her all of the money she wanted in addition to what he supplied her with for meeting family expenses.

Experience shows that not infrequently the complaining wife lacks the knowledge to administer the family finances properly. Many girls enter married life and assume responsibility for a home who have no knowledge of a budget. They go into all kinds of buying schemes. "So long as ready money is at hand to meet payments they are

Depend upon it, the styles will always reflect that which is recognized as the latest; fit and quality will be, as ever, paramount in our thoughts.

Murray's

502 9th St. N. W.

"The Home of Personality"



MERRY XMAS

Let us wish you a Merry Xmas and a New Year filled with happiness and achievement.

To help you on the road to success, we shall continue to feature Suits and Overcoats at—

\$20
\$25
\$30

Depend upon it, the styles will always reflect that which is recognized as the latest; fit and quality will be, as ever, paramount in our thoughts.

Murray's

502 9th St. N. W.

"The Home of Personality"

WOULD PROBE DEEPER IN DOMESTIC WAR



Men charged with non-support of their families should be investigated by the court before consideration of the charge is undertaken, according to Judge Kathryn Sellers, of the Juvenile Court, seen above, who is championing expansion of her court to a Domestic Court having jurisdiction in all cases involving divorce, non-support and the disposal of dependent children. Incompetency of wives to manage family finances is a frequent cause for the filing of non-support charges, declares Judge Sellers.

Fox Runs Ahead of Car at Speed of 35 Miles

ROCHESTER, N. Y., Dec. 25.—A little red fox living in a burrow somewhere in western New York has been the subject of a Morvich backed off the map for speed, according to John M. Ohmslead of Honeoye Falls.

When Ohmslead arrived in this city yesterday afternoon he said a red fox leaped a fence along the highway about five miles from his home and ran ahead of his car. The speedometer registered thirty-five miles an hour for about five miles. Ohmslead says the animal paced the machine, never slackening speed.

A broken chain rattling against a mudguard frightened the fox away.

satisfied. Then the time comes when the husband may be out of work. Debts accumulate. The wife is forced to let obligations remain unpaid. It is but a short step to the idea she is not being properly supported.

"The man may be doing everything within his power to meet his obligations toward his family, and yet fail to measure up to the expectations of an inexperienced housewife. Truly I believe no action in non-support cases should be taken until the circumstances of the husband and father have been investigated.

"In my experience, as judge of the Juvenile Court, I have frequently been able to solve problems for families where investigation proved mismanagement of family income by the wife was the direct cause for the complaint made against the husband."

Judge Sellers also believed the Domestic Court should be given supervision over children taken from their parents and placed in institutions. Where parents prove themselves able to resume responsibility for their children's welfare, the court should be empowered, she insists, with authority to restore them to their parents.

A bill to enlarge the powers of the juvenile court to embrace Judge Sellers' expansion ideas has been introduced by Congressman Goody Koonz. Its passage is being supported by many Washingtonians in accord with Judge Sellers.

One of the most important meetings held by the committee on juvenile court standards occurs here January 6 and 7. It will be attended by men and women from all sections of the country.

MATINEE BURGLAR TAKEN ON FIRST NIGHT JOB

NEW YORK, Dec. 25.—A "matinee burglar" who confessed 100 afternoon burglaries, according to police, but who was caught the first time he worked after dark, was in the lineup at police headquarters. Police said the value of goods stolen since last August was \$200,000. He was Thomas F. Melford, who dresses like a collegian.

Melford, the police said, admitted looting the apartment of Lou Telleghin, actor, of \$5,000 worth of goods, and said he had usually confined his activities to afternoon work.

SEVEN IN DEATH CELLS OF D. C. JAIL

Stockings Filled and Xmas Tree, With Good Dinner Is Ready for Prisoners.

While Washington relaxes to celebrate Christmas Day according to the dictates of the heart's desire, seven men in "Murderers' Row" out at the District jail are dutifully taking part in a simple but impressive observance of the Yuletide, likely to prove their last on earth.

When these men under death sentence awoke this morning they found, together with each of the other inmates at the jail, that Santa Claus had not forgotten them, for a bulging stocking filled with goodies was hanging beside each individual cell.

Through the thoughtful efforts of Mrs. David R. Cowell, wife of the pastor of Trinity Church, the stockings were provided and, in order that they might be a complete surprise, they were hung in the cells while the prisoners slept.

Help Them To Forget.

Major W. L. Peak, in charge of the Jail, will make every effort today to make the men in "Murderers' Row" as well as all other of the inmates, forget "the road ahead" and, with this in mind, has arranged a number of activities for the day.

Following a custom of long standing, a huge Christmas tree has been placed in the center of the cell block and a number of delicacies have been added to the bill of fare for the Christmas meal. Here's what the prisoners will have to eat:

Roast pork, mashed potatoes, brown gravy, celery, cranberry sauce, coffee and plum pudding. Religious ceremonies will be held for the prisoners both this morning and afternoon, while more than usual levity will be permitted among the prisoners wherever possible.

Three Old-Timers.

Major Peak said this morning that the jail has never had more than seven men in "Murderers' Row" on a Christmas Day in its history. He reminded that Charles Price, colored, convicted of killing Robert Smith and Edgar Randolph Perrygo, twenty years, convicted of killing Mrs. Mary Emily Perrygo, and Zhang Sung Wen, convicted of killing Dr. Ben Sen Wu, have already spent several Christmas days in the isolated death cells at the jail.

Delay in the execution of the death sentence in these cases has resulted, he points out, through the disputed legality of the District having an authorized jury. This question is now before the Court of Appeals.

The other men in the death cells today are George R. Banton, colored, convicted of killing Samuel Prye; Rufus Gordon, convicted of killing Simon Miller; George S. Epps, convicted of killing his wife, and Ernest A. Shands, colored, who is No. 7, and received sentence only a few days ago.

Perrygo to See Mother.

Perrygo, a lad of twenty, whom Major Peak described today as a "most excellent" prisoner and who naturally elicits the most sympathy on the Christmas Day, will welcome a periodic visit from his mother this afternoon.

Wan, who, Major Peak confides, is the "loneliest" prisoner at the jail, has not received any visitors outside of spiritual advisers for some time, it is learned. He has taken a keen interest in the approaching celebration, however, as have all of the inmates save Shands, who has not been behind the bars long enough to become resigned to his fate.

Trying to forget as far as possible that they are in jail, the majority of the inmates this morning took a healthy interest in unwrapping the gifts in their stockings, and the same phrase wafted from cell to cell at the jail as today rings from door to door in the city:

"Merry Christmas."

JUDGE GIVES PEDDLER \$5 INSTEAD OF A FINE

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 25.—Knotted hands, proving he was an ironworker unable to obtain employment, saved the day for Frederick Reese, of Ninth and Vine streets, and his two companions, Louis Goldaber and Joseph Silverstone, both of Thirtieth and Page streets, when they appeared before Magistrate Renshaw in central station yesterday charged with peddling their Christmas houses on the street without a license.

"I am an ironworker," said Reese, "but my hands gave out and I started to sell the houses to make a day's living." The prisoner's hands were cut and bruised and his shoulders bent.

"Yes, it is pretty tough," said the magistrate, "and you have suffered enough." He then slipped a \$5 bill into Reese's gnarled hand.

"I expected punishment instead of help," blurted Reese. "I'll never forget you."

AUTO COLLISIONS KILL THREE, INJURE THREE

LINCOLN, Neb., Dec. 25.—Three persons are dead, three seriously injured, as a result of automobile accidents within the last twenty-four hours.

The body of Dennis McLaughlin, of Omaha, was found buried under a pile of holly decorated boxes and his overturned car, McLaughlin was en route to his home at West Point, Neb., for Christmas.

Paul Sandman was killed when his wagon was upset by an automobile containing four Lincoln college boys. The motorists were all seriously hurt.

Leonard Bezatz, of South Omaha, drove his car into a trolley and was taken from the wreckage dead. Two girl companions are near death.

THIS FAMILY IS A LEAGUE OF NATIONS



St. Paul, Minn., lays claim to having the most unique family in the world, consisting of all girls, sisters, and two guardians. Fifteen years ago the Reiff sisters, Misses Minna and Henriette, had a spacious and comfortable home that they did not know what to do with. They adopted a little German orphan girl, and found the experiment so interesting that they adopted three little Scotch girls. After that, one by one, other orphans found a home with the Reiff sisters, until now the family numbers nine girls, representing Germany, France, Scotland, Finland, Bohemia and Canada, and of course, the United States. Not only are all the girls wrapped in the lives of each other but in all their lives under the Reiff roof, not a single act of unkindness or unharmonious action has taken place. In the top row, left to right are Emma and Muriel of Scotland; Dorothea of Germany; Abby of Scotland. In the second row are Ernesta of Bohemia, Margaret of France; Miss Henriette Reiff; Amelia of Canada; Miss Minna Reiff; Elizabeth of France and Martha of Finland.

BRENTWOOD TO HOLD PUBLIC SING

Citizens to Assemble in Public Square for General Merrymaking.

BRENTWOOD, Md., Dec. 25.—The Christmas spirit is being displayed in Brentwood, Md. Rainier, and Cottage City by various town community affairs.

Tomorrow evening at 8 o'clock a program will be given in Riverdale under the auspices of the Riverdale Citizens Improvement Association. The affair will be held in the public square opposite the railroad station. The program will be as follows: Selections by band; community singing; tableau, "The Star of Bethlehem" with music; chorus, "O Holy Night"; tableau, "The Nativity" with quartet; chorus, "Joy to the World," and two other tableaux. "The Night Before Christmas" and "The Trophery." Fred A. McGonigle, chairman of the general arrangements committee.

Mt. Rainier's Ninth accident occurred last evening when a car driven by A. A. Vaughn, of Brentwood, struck little Miss "Dots" Bakermith, ten years old, of Mt. Rainier. The little girl was not hurt.

All patrons of the Citizens Interstate Bank of Mt. Rainier, were presented with Christmas tokens on Saturday evening, J. H. Campbell, dressed as Santa Claus, gave candy to the women and children and cigars to the men.

FOUR LECTURES WILL BE GIVEN AT COLORED MEET

Four lectures will feature an open meeting of the American Negro Academy, to be held Wednesday and Thursday, at the Cleveland School, Eighth and T streets northwest, at 7:30 p. m.

Prof. Robert T. Kerlin will speak on "Race in the American South." Others will be Arthur A. Schomburg, president of the organization, on "The Negro and Christianity"; Dr. Joseph France, on "The Negro and Race Consciousness," and T. Montgomery Gregory, on "The Negro and the Church." Business meetings will be held at the Mus-solet Club at 11 a. m.

DELTA KAPPA EPSILON TO RAISE HALF MILLION

The project of raising a \$500,000 fund to further the interests of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity will be among the subjects for discussion at the order's seventy-eighth annual convention, to be held in this city, Wednesday to Saturday, inclusive.

"Dek" delegates will be present from forty-three chapters. A get-together smoker will be held Wednesday night by Eta Chapter, University of Virginia, and business sessions will open the following morning at the Willard Hotel. Friday morning there will be a pilgrimage to the tomb of Admiral Percy, Arlington Cemetery, who was a member of the fraternity. The annual banquet will take place Friday night.

EDWIN DENBY TO HEAD MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION

Officers for the ensuing year have been elected by the Michigan State Association of the District of Columbia as follows:

President, Edwin Denby; vice president, Earl C. Michener; treasurer, Joseph A. Fenton; secretary, Charles F. Conaul; executive committee, Bert H. Brockway, Fred G. Union.

Goldren, Carl E. Grabbill, Alexander Grant, Ralph L. Hebbard, Bert W. Kennedy, Donald L. Luxford, William J. McGee, Carl O. Makham, William J. McGee, David J. Nevin, William F. O'Brien, Henry M. Rose, Col. Oliver L. Spaulding, Jr., G. Roscoe Swift, Howard W. White, and Burridge Wilson.

A committee was appointed to arrange for the annual banquet on January 26, the anniversary of the admission of Michigan into the Union.

ABNER DRURY

Is There a Santa Claus?

Twenty-five years ago little Virginia O'Hanlon, perplexed by this question, wrote to the Editor of the New York Sun: "I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?"

The following editorial published in The Sun in 1897, one of the finest things in our literature, answered for all time and all children this old, old question.

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the scepticism of a sceptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exists, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginia. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

